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pacts of friendship made, visits, feasts, and meetings organized regularly. Contacts and forms of intercourse may stretch beyond this area—they regularly do in trade connexions or in the contacts involved in the political system of the country. Moreover, modern communications have greatly extended their scope. Yet these contacts and single lines of intercourse hardly affect the self-containedness of the community. A sign of the tendency to seek regular contacts with places and groups without is travelling. And here we see that the villagers evince little interest in travelling and in visits to other towns and countries.[1] In the small Beni village Pichi, about five miles from Bida, only three men out of fifty have been across the Kaduna river or outside the area of their sub-tribe. Most peasants, at least the older men, with whom I have discussed travelling, said in so many words that travelling had no interest for them.

Again, the self-limitation of community life expresses itself in the parochial outlook of the villagers. There is a striking lack of interest in the life and customs of the peoples 'outside'; or the interest is of that lofty and self-centred kind that will credit anything unusual reported of 'foreigners'. When discussing with villagers the customs, for example, or the religious rites, of neighbouring communities you will be told: 'We don't know; we do this and that, but they may have different customs', or you will be given unreliable, second-hand information, often biased and sensationally made up. Certain of these opinions have become quite firmly rooted—commonly accepted popular theories about other communities. The people of Jebba Island professed to know nothing about the religious practices of Gbajibo, a village some twenty miles up the river—'they have quite different customs there' is what they told me. A visit to Gbajibo revealed that the religious practices of the two places were almost identical. In Bida and Doko I was told that the people of Etsú were blacksmiths by origin and possessed special blacksmith magic. The people of Etsú themselves had a quite different tradition of origin and their magical rites had nothing to do with blacksmith work. In several Nupe villages the people told me that while they themselves performed the *gunnu* ritual in the open, other villages possessed special sacred *gunnu* huts. I examined every case, but found no trace of this reported difference. This tendency to assume non-existent and exaggerate insignificant cultural differences between one's own village and other communities represents, on the ideological plane, the assertion of the cultural identity of the community. As in the case of the tribe, we find an ideology heedless of empirical facts supplying the conceptual background for a social configuration.

We must, however, qualify these statements about the self-contained nature of the village community. There exists one kind of interest and knowledge—and this time keen interest and on the whole well-informed knowledge—which embraces groups outside of the village community, namely, interest and knowledge bearing on the kingdom, its countries

[1] I am speaking here of the inland villages and not, of course, of the riverain Nupe, whose very existence depends on travelling. Nor do I refer here to migrations and similar permanent changes of residence.

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and peoples, its organization and its personalities, and above all its centre, the town of Bida. It seems characteristic that of the people of Sakpe, a backwood village in the centre of Bida Emirate, a large number have been to Bida, thirty miles away, but no one to Laboži, which is only ten miles away but lies in the opposite direction to Bida. There is only an apparent contradiction between this parochial outlook with respect to the community next door and this interest for the kingdom and its capital. It reflects the centripetal structure of the system of cultural 'co-ordination' which we identified with the Nupe state. But let us examine first, under the aspect of community and common life, its capital, Bida.

Bida as it exists to-day is a comparatively young town. It was founded by the first Fulani Emir of Nupe about 1860. The old Beni village of Bida which stood on its site, a small village of four *efu*, forms to-day the 'old city' of Bida, its innermost part, known as *ba nin*, the Inside. At the time of the British occupation Bida is reported to have had a population of 60,000. Later it dropped rapidly: the enormous households of the feudal lords dissolved, slaves and private armies disappeared, and absentee landlords moved out into the country to live on their land. The old trade-route to the south which ran through Bida was diverted by the British, who suggested the shorter route from Zaria to Lokoja.[1] Trade began to avoid the defeated, impoverished capital. Some ten years ago Bida counted over 30,000 inhabitants; the last figure, for 1934, is 23,286. But the cosmopolitan character of the population still betrays its character of a metropolis: all tribal sections of Nupe are represented, and besides almost every tribe of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba, Yagba, Bunu, Kukuruku, Dakakari, Kamberi, Koro, Asaba, Gara, Tiv, and many more. The Nupe of Bida total over 20,000; of the strangers, Yoruba with nearly 600 and Hausa with 400–500 constitute the largest contingent in this medley of tribes and races.

And now the town itself. From a broken-off plateau that forms its northern edge, from the foot of two flat-topped hills, the town sweeps down into the plain. The town wall embracing the wide expanse of Bida runs over the edge of the plateau, climbs down into the plain, crosses two rivers and opens its gates upon four roads. This wall was estimated to measure twelve miles in circumference. To-day it has lost its former importance. It has broken down in many places and has been left unrepaired. A go-ahead Administrative Officer some two years ago had ordered all town gates to be pulled down—to make room for the increased motor traffic (which never came). Also, the town no longer fills the space within the wall, and many ruins and deserted places inside the wall betray the changes that have overtaken Bida and its people.

Four big roads lead through Bida, roughly in the shape of a cross, from east to west and north to south. The road from the Kaduna river enters Bida in the west, by the 'Wuya gate', so named after the village on the banks of the Kaduna. Just outside the west gate is 'New Bida'—a nucleus of New Bida—consisting to-day only of a few official buildings, among them the Emir of Bida's newly built residence. We leave New Bida behind, with its brick buildings, its tin roofs, and glass windows, and

[1] Dr. W. B. Baikie, R.N., *J. R. Geogr. Soc.*, 1867, p. 362.

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their class origin. There is no sphere of life, not even an ordinary social gathering, in which the representatives of the various classes can meet, as it were, on 'neutral ground'.

The social stratification stretches beyond the formalized rank system embodied in the political structure. It embraces the whole country and absorbs and reinterprets in its own sense the cultural configuration of Nupe at large. On this wider scale the commoners of the town, the people of no name and title, rank higher than the people and tribes outside the capital, with their petty village titles and offices. The citizens of Bida look down upon the *gberiši*, the 'heathen' in the villages, ridiculing their habits and character, their fashions and the way they talk, their lack of education and 'urbanity'.

These differences of customs and habits are real enough. But they are underlined on the part of the Bida people by that credulity and fondness of exaggeration which we encountered already in the discussion of the village community and which, here even more strongly, expresses the biased self-centred interest of a group strongly conscious of its cultural identity. I have recorded many sensational accounts of the religious customs of the *gberiši* in which the Bida people firmly believe, unaware, or unwilling to admit, that they are quite untrue. Bida informants told me that among the peasants and pagans women practise the craft of medicine and not men as in Bida—another statement which I could easily disprove. Or I was warned not to believe anything that villagers say—'they are all liars'. Even if it were possible to test quantitatively this collective libel, it would, I am afraid, hardly reveal any real difference between town and country. What I have called, in the discussion of the village community, an ideology sustaining the assertion of group identity subserves here the assertion of (in a loose sense) class distinctions.

To return to the real, concrete, cultural differences linked with class. The framework of status which we have outlined is filled out with a multitude of minor traits, differences of conduct, extending even to walks of life which may appear only remotely connected with the central political and economic structure. We shall meet with these differences in every stage of our investigation; let me anticipate here a few typical instances as they would strike the observer of Nupe everyday life. He would note class differences even in one of the most elementary wants—nutrition: rich and poor have different food habits. The poor eat little meat, chicken very rarely (unless for religious reasons); but meat cooked in palm-oil is eaten every day by the wealthy, and chicken-and-rice, the most delicious food the Nupe know, comes on the table at least once a week. In Bida the sorghum or millet grain is always milled to fine flour; in some peasant districts it is boiled unmilled—a preparation of food which the more refined despise, although it is undoubtedly of higher nutritive value. The people of Bida drink palm-wine, the peasants in the districts feast on sorghum-beer.

Again, in the matter of recreation: among the peasants the men dance to the music of flutes and drums, or the women sing to the clapping of hands or the beating of upturned calabashes. Among the sophisticated

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565 serve the precarious balance of power in the feudal state. It becomes, in
555 the hands of the established ruling group, an efficient weapon to safe-
guard their class privileges.

Social mobility of a more fluid, indirect kind, which admits individuals
565 to a close association with the privileged classes and indirectly to a
certain share in their privileges, reaches a much larger proportion of the
186 population. It is upheld by the institution of clientship and by the
existence of the Mallam intelligentsia 'between the classes'. The possi-
bilities of social mobility, above all, the extensive possibilities of this
indirect mobility, account for the lack of cohesion among the lower
classes of Nupe, or at least of Bida. The conspicuous symbolism of rank
and the rigid definition of the social estates cannot but stimulate class-
consciousness: commoners will always describe themselves as *tálaka*,
and men of rank will leave you in no doubt about their consequential
position. But this class-consciousness is blurred by thoughts and pros-
pects of a social career that might raise anyone to a higher estate. Con-
cern about betterment rather than sentiments of group solidarity define
the nature of class-consciousness in Nupe. This can be seen most
clearly in the attitude of the younger generation, who are just planning
their future career. Only in two social groups do we find a more strongly
pronounced and self-contained consciousness of common fate and
common, class-bound interests; they are characteristically groups in
which mobility, direct or indirect, plays hardly any part—the closed
group of guild-organized artisans and (in the framework of their
scattered communities) the peasantry.

565 How far social mobility took the form of local mobility, that is, of a
movement to the town in the attempt to bridge over the cultural and
social gulf between townspeople and peasantry, we cannot say. If it
existed, it could only have been of very limited scope. For there were
strong natural limits to such a development, above all, the scarcity of
land near the capital.

Now to be complete and convincing, social rise must go hand in hand
with assimilation to the habits and modes of life typical of the higher
classes. This, in Nupe, proves no stumbling-block. The familiar in-
stances of 'parvenus' who, though adopted into the higher social order,
do not fit into the picture of its social life are unknown. The explanation
is that cultural assimilation of this kind is much more widespread than
actual mobility. The mechanisms of social mobility which we have
enumerated all accord their benefits to individuals, not to groups; on
the contrary, individuals may succeed where groups (local communities,
tribal sections) would fail to achieve that improvement of social con-
ditions and that increased security bound up with classes. But the
assimilation of which we have just spoken must be regarded as a qualified
form of social mobility which includes groups and whole sections of the
population. Whole groups are free at least to imitate the external
characteristics of the higher social orders. Where economic conditions
allow it commoners and peasants adopt habits and modes of life of their
betters—fashions in dress and housing, their way of talk, their food
habits, and the forms of entertainment which they patronize. They also

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The needle killed the men of Dibo,
And also the men of Baro [a town in that district].
O father, save me and let me go.
If you must use your needle,
Do not let it bite me.

The 'needle' is the injection needle, and the 'Mallam of the needle' the native medical assistant who was performing the injection and who, according to the testimony of the song, could be bribed to spare the patient the (very painful) injection. The testimony, incidentally, was true; some time later I learned that one of the native medical assistants had actually taken bribes from the people, and had been apprehended not long after I had heard the song.

182 642 To summarize: political co-ordination calls into being a co-ordination of interest—actual interest units—which in certain respects overcomes the heterogeneity of tribe, culture, and even class, and includes the whole people. Yet as economic co-operation goes its own ways, often disregarding political frontiers, so the other forms of 'reorientation' may tend to further the formation of new, even antagonistic, groups rather than to cement the political unit. The 'interest units' are, paradoxically, units that spell disunity. The paradox is easily solved: the common interests round which these units are focused are such that they show a different aspect and portend different things to rulers and ruled, or to adherents of different political factions. The units which they create may efface tribal and cultural divisions, and temporarily even the barriers of class: but in critical moments they will only put forth more forcibly the existing disparities and forms of antagonism.

We turn, then, to another group of integrative factors which seem to succeed where the interest units fail. They wield integration which endorses unconditionally the political unit. The secret of their success lies in that they attempt unity and integration in spheres in which the political interests suffer such integration to exist, and in which the divergent political interests are overcome by some stronger incentive to unity.

182 642 186 The study of the unity which the Nupe state has achieved, or is achieving, reveals the effectiveness of two main groups of such incentives. To formulate them tentatively: one is self-enhancement—especially a self-enhancement that (in the language of psycho-analysis) 'sublimates' the humiliating experience of political dependence and inferiority; the other, the appeal of the mystic and supernatural. The first incentive reveals itself in the progressive identification of the people with the cultural values typical of the social *elite*; the second, in their readiness to adopt new myths and embrace religious beliefs and practices, which are vessels of political 'propaganda' at the same time. The two incentives may join forces, self-enhancement being offered in the realm of religion —as in the spreading of Islam, the religion of the rulers and conquerors, among the subject groups of the kingdom. We can also discern the agency of a third incentive, more unspecific and subsidiary in nature, which, as it were, canalizes the influence of the other two, namely, the

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appeal to an historical (or quasi-historical) turn of mind. I have already called the Nupe an historically-minded people: here is another bit of evidence for this bent. We shall see presently how under its influence ritual emblems become relics, and self-enhancement takes the form of exultation in past glories.[1]

Self-enhancement, then. These are the historical facts: the Nupe state has bound its many groups and peoples to its own fate, made them share its adventures, its conquests, the fruits of its victories and defeats. But the element of compulsion behind this commonness of fate disappears in its mental reflection. The commonness of fate is lifted up into the sphere of things eminently glorious and desirable. The people are eager to identify themselves with the kingdom and its fortunes, and share in a collective pride that ignores the social and cultural distance between rulers and ruled. Even the wars which deprived the Nupe of their own rights, chiefs of their independence, peasants of their wealth and land, become a cherished heroic memory. I was discussing the role of strangers in Bida with old Ndakotsu, one of my great friends, and I asked him whether there had been any Kamberi, Kamuku, or Gbari among the strangers who visited Bida regularly. Ndakotsu, last descendant of the Beni town-kings of Bida, who never became quite used to the idea that the *gòîši* (Fulani) had robbed him of 'his' town, said ironically: 'Kamuku and Kamberi? Yes, but only as our slaves'—the 'our' evidently meaning a Nupe which credited to itself the successes of its Fulani rulers. When I first came to Mokwa my informants first of all showed me proudly the historical places near Mokwa where some of the battles in the wars of the Fulani against the usurper Umar Bahaushe had been fought, and insisted on describing them all in detail, as if this were the most important thing I had to learn. This did not prevent them later on from complaining bitterly about the tyranny of the Fulani and their indifference to the fate of the people.

This new, proud consciousness of a unity which embraces the whole kingdom is kept alive by every song telling of old times and every story relating the adventures and feats of the kings of Nupe. With fashions and cultural practices, songs and stories spread from the capital throughout the country. The songs composed in honour of the king or one of his noblemen by the drummers of Bida find their way into all the bigger villages of the country. In Mokwa I heard a song which had been composed in Bida in 1918 in honour of *Etsu* Bello's first motor-car, the first motor-car in the country. I put this song in here as an example not of the force of poetic expression which it possesses (in spite of the uncongenial topic), but as an example of its efficient 'propaganda for the kingdom'.

[1] There exist also certain other subsidiary stimuli, such as aesthetic appeal, which we may disregard here. One may put the question whether these various stimuli are to be regarded as universal or as peculiar to the culture which we are studying. More comparative material is needed to answer this question finally. However, one can fairly safely say already that the appeal of the supernatural is a universal trait of the human mind, while the appeal to self-enhancement, and still more so the appeal to historical appreciation, differs in effectiveness in different cultures; it is eminently typical of Nupe culture.

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Song of Etsu Bello

The name of Allah is the beginning of all learning.
Let us speak of the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought a motor-car,
The whole of Bida went out to build a road.
Younger brother and elder brother, they went out to build the road.
All the people on the farms went out to build the road.
The young bride, she went to build the road.
The bridegroom, he went to build the road.
But why did they all go out to build the road?
It was because *Etsu* Bello had bought a motor-car.
Because of that all people went out to build a road.
They said: Let us build a road on which the car can travel.
Then the man who wants to go to Baddeggi, in this car he will go.
And Zungeru, the man who wants to go to Zungeru, in this car he will go.
And Wuya, who will travel to Wuya, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Jima, in this car he will go.
The man who will go to Kacha, in this car he will go.
The man who will travel beyond the river, in this car he will go.
Thus he will go, they said, and therefore let us make the road.
Etsu Bello has the money to buy the car,
But the car will benefit all the people of Bida, from the farms and from the city,
The great man and the servant.
They thank *Etsu* Bello because he bought the car.
Etsu Bello, who has horses, and who now has a car,
Etsu Bello can say: Though the horse may break his legs,
We shall go all the same.
On the day when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The bottles of the glass-makers turned into red beads.
And the kernels of the gombara grass became necklaces.[1]
In that year when *Etsu* Bello bought the motor-car,
The men were beating the ground,
And the woman, she was sitting at home.
How did it happen that the woman was sitting at home?
Of old it was the woman who was beating the ground,
And the man he just stood and watched.
But because of this motor-car of *Etsu* Bello,
All the men were beating the ground, and that is that.[2]
And all the people, the whole of Bida,
They were saying their thanks to *mace da ciki*.[3]
And all Bida was giving thanks to *karan giya*,[4]
Who has sold the car to *Etsu* Bello.

[1] i.e. all the people who went out to see the motor-car were dressed in their most beautiful dress, and the glass-makers of Bida were busy manufacturing ornaments for the occasion.

[2] By 'beating the ground' is meant the levelling of the ground in the road building. The same term is also used for the levelling of the floor in the Nupe huts, a work which is reserved for the women. Therefore this comment on the change of times.

[3] *Mace da ciki* (Hausa, pregnant woman), the rather irreverent nickname the Bida people had for the District Officer at that time.

[4] *Karan giya* (Hausa, a grass with prickles—*Pennisetum*), another nickname for the District Officer at that time.

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And all the people were giving thanks to *Etsu* Bello,
Because he gave his money to buy a motor-car,
That motor-car that will become a thing of benefit
To all the human beings.

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In myth and religion the 'binding forces' of the kingdom gather themselves to fullest strength. The *Etsu* Nupe is not, as we have seen, the religious as well as the political leader of his people; unlike the village chief, he cannot even claim kinship links with the priests of his country. But Nupe kingship is linked in so many ways with religious usages and forms of ritual symbolism that they inevitably become instruments of political solidarity. Rites and beliefs are focused upon the person of the king. Appeals for the help of supernatural agencies become appeals to agencies more or less clearly symbolic of the political system. The welfare and continuity of the community, unthinkable without these supernatural safeguards, become unthinkable without the state.

Out of the weak and irregular uniformity of beliefs and rituals and out of disconnected local cults and traditions the kingdom thus creates a new religious community. One of the centres of this religious unification is that 'mythical charter' which made the dynasty of Nupe kings descendants of the mythical culture-hero, Tsoede. Relics of Tsoede, regalia, instruments of ordeal, magical emblems, which exist in every town of the Emirate, are the symbols of this ancient sacred pact. The name and tradition of Tsoede is also associated with cults which secure childbirth, fertility, and well-being, with certain rituals which prevent floods of the Niger, drive away disease, or bring punishment upon a criminal.[1] To take one example only. In Mokwa exists a certain ritual called *Tsoede* or *sara* (Hausa, lit. malicious accusation, and also snake bite; refers here to the use of the ritual as ordeal), which is practised as ordeal, or whenever trouble befalls the community. It is performed by the *Sheshi*, that 'king-maker' of whom we have heard before; he places the short 'chain of Tsoede', the insignia of his office, on the ground in the sacred grove, makes a sacrifice of beer and fowl, and speaks thus:

> **God, we have come.**
> **God, everybody has come.**
> **This ancient thing of Tsoede**
> **Which is lying on the ground,**
> **It says we should bring beer.**
> **Because of the old saying which we have heard,**
> **Because of that we bring beer and fowl.**
> **Tsoede, make the whole town prosper [or whatever is the special aim of the invocation].**

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A powerful secret society, organized to combat witchcraft, the order of the *ndakó gboyá*, became a *kuti 'tsu*, a King's Cult, only half a century ago. There is no doubt that the *ndakó gboyá* cult itself existed long before that. But under *Etsu* Masaba the head of this order, the grandfather of

[1] This latter cult I have described in *Man*, 1935, 143. The association of Tsoede with the main fertility cult of Nupe, the *gunnu*, is discussed in *J.R.A.I.*, 1937, p. 118.

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in Bida Emirate. On the second day of the *Sallah* the *Etsu* holds the great *nkó* of the year, a reception at which everyone who holds rank and title and every person of consequence comes to salute his sovereign, to offer gifts of loyalty and to receive counter-gifts expressing the king's favour. For two days tens of thousands of people crowd the streets of Bida and assemble in front of the royal residence—Bida people as well as peasants from the villages who flock to the capital to see the *Sallah*. There they watch their rulers ride past in all their splendour, equipped with their paraphernalia of rank; they listen to music, drum signals, and songs of praise; they join in the general rejoicing, made more joyful by the largesse and gifts of food and kola-nuts which a gracious sovereign causes to be distributed among his loyal subjects. Here, then, it falls to the elements of worship and secular display, inextricably fused, and supported by the stimulus of mass experience, to mobilize periodically sentiments of loyalty and the consciousness of unity.

From these manifold sources springs that common mental and moral orientation which we call national solidarity and loyalty to throne and country. Here are born the sentiments of unity which, in the words of Lowie, 'flourish without compulsion'. They crystallize largely round the figure of the king, thus giving substance to the self-description of the people of Nupe kingdom as 'king's men'. Yet the king is not simply the state—the factors checking his authority, his varying powers, show clearly that he is only an organ of the state. Nor is he a symbol of the power and unity of the state in the same concrete and personal sense in which the village chief can be regarded as a symbol of his community. Kings have been deposed and exiled; they have to fight and intrigue for their position; they are subject to the openly working balance of power. All this is well known—too well known for the identification of the person of the king with the unity of the society. Loyalty to a personal king of Nupe is factional; solidarity and loyalty on a national scale rallies round the throne and round the abstract principle of kingship rather than round the actual king.[1]

But the 'binding forces' are not wholly pivoted on kingship. They yield also a consciousness of commonness referring to the country as such, the people as such, to a largely abstract and timeless collective identity which no longer needs the sustaining symbol of kingship. These 'binding forces' implant in the minds of the people of the state the realization that, over and above tribal sections, cultural and class divisions, they form a single human material, living an identical life. They teach a new meaning of the word Nupe, which is the meaning of *nation*. Collective pride, otherwise vested in the tribe or the local community, and its counterpart, the aloof or critical attitude towards other groups and their culture, fuses with and is supplanted by the sentiments of national pride—patriotism. Co-ordination of behaviour loses its aspect of a dictated order sanctioned by force, and becomes indis-

[1] It is possible that this was less so in the pre-Fulani kingdom, with its undivided rulership, invested with ritual functions and based on a unique, automatic, system of succession. Here kingship may well have been accepted in a much more concrete and personal sense as the symbol and pivot of political unity.

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tinguishable from the self-willed conformity born of a closely knit community life. The state itself becomes that twin-creation as which MacIver conceives it, and, with one side of its being, a community.

The process is not yet complete. Existing social divisions and divergent 'interest units' are not wholly submerged in the new consciousness of unity. Sociologically, the incompleteness of the development is visible in the reluctance with which certain sections, especially among the peasantry, respond to the cultural reorientation. Psychologically, it manifests itself in the ambiguous attitude of many individuals in the lower classes, vacillating between bitter resentment against the ruling class and readiness to identify themselves with its glory, of which we have seen examples. It is an attitude familiar in many societies similarly split by sharp distinctions of political and social inequality.[1] One might doubt whether this process of intensive unification will ever be completed now, with new influences coming in, new cultural and class divisions being formed which disturb the steady growth and blur the old border-lines. I do not myself think that this will be so. But in a wider sense the growth of the Nupe nation, even if it were to continue undisturbed, would never be complete: for the nation is a dynamic, not a static, unit, a unit which must constantly readjust itself and constantly absorb new 'raw material'—new generations, newly-formed classes, strata, groups.

The achieved integration of the state is then in some measure, like that of the village community, the integration of a 'multiple system of control'. Yet the state and the village community differ not only in the intensity and completeness but also in the quality of the integration which they achieve. We noticed that the 'binding forces' of the state appear in varying degrees of concreteness, from actual co-operation to moral orientation, and that those of most abstract appeal were the really effective ones. In this, I believe, lies the essential difference between the integrative mechanism operating in the village community and this new mechanism of creating nation-wide unity. Evidently, the very difference in size and numbers must play a decisive part. In the village all integrative agencies can address themselves to an identical group substratum, and can envelop it in the network of actual collaboration. The state, with its huge human substratum, its subdivisions and sections, precludes the full effectiveness of such direct and concrete integration. Direct contact and direct co-adaptation of behaviour is subordinated to indirect methods of bringing about conformity, through ideological persuasion. Actual concerted action gives way to efforts at securing parallel action, and 'common' interests in the strict sense are replaced by 'identical' interests. Instead of communal rites at which groups that in other contexts act as political units are welded together by the influence of religious experience, we have the spreading of common beliefs and practices designed to call forth identity of outlook and to foster, though not an identical group, a group conscious of identity.

Ultimately and rather surprisingly, then, the binding forces of the

[1] M. T. Herskovits has called it, by a suggestive term, 'socialized ambivalence' (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 295).

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No machinery therefore exists to deal with such contingencies— no provision for tuition of the converts-to-be, and no formal procedure of admission or perhaps excommunication. To say it again, that sum-total of beliefs and practices we call Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari religion, is simply the religion of the people who, on other grounds also, call themselves Nupe, Yoruba, or Gwari; and though it is possible for single observances or even items of belief (such as the belief in the significance of death by lightning) to be adopted or 'borrowed', the notion that the religion as a whole can be exported or changed for another is inconceivable.

This self-sufficiency of the Nupe faith goes together with a marked detachment and tolerance towards other creeds. The Nupe, as we know, are greatly interested in discussing the religions of others; but they do so dispassionately, and indeed think it possible that the radically different beliefs of their neighbours are justifiable and, in a vague sense, as 'right' as their own. The coexistence of widely varying practices in Nupe itself must have helped in fostering this tolerance towards alien beliefs; certainly, any person showing such tolerance is not for that reason considered an apostate or even a doubter. The Nupe creed simply lays little claim to any exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Yet it is not for that reason less securely held. If the Nupe do not argue that their creed is the best of all possible creeds, neither do they question that, for them, it is simply given, as is their language and all the other features that go with 'being a Nupe'. Their detached tolerance thus seems only the obverse of this self-sufficiency of 'tribal' religions.

The fact that alien observances are sometimes adopted for their apparent utility or some other attraction is not felt to be inconsistent with this notion of a 'given' tribal religion; at least, the inconsistency is corrected by tacitly granting that alien practices could yet 'become Nupe', that is, could be added to those which, at that stage, were indicative of the social identity. The accomplished fact, then, re-establishes the *status quo*; the new religious practice, now regularly executed by a population which by numerous other criteria regards itself as one, as 'the Nupe', becomes itself 'of Nupe'; so that the people can again detachedly view 'alien' observances or beliefs. Let me restate this in more general terms. The conscious identity of Nupe, as of any society, comes from the awareness of a large stable array of modes of behaviour understood to be typical of the society; any single

by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace' (on all who seek it), which makes 'the sacred generally 'accessible', and under whose authority members can be 'enrolled' (see Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', *Essays in Sociology*, p. 288).

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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We must note, secondly, that all the Lagos Nupe, without exception, are today Moslems. Oddly enough, they claim to be good Moslems, even though they openly and proudly 'own' the *gunnu* and the other pagan rites. Yet the people see no conflict between the faith they now profess and their adherence to the pagan cults. The two are kept in separate compartments: the Moslem faith belongs to the present; the pagan observances are a token of a past one wishes to continue: they simply go with remaining a Nupe. And if the pagan observances are also supernaturally effective, this seems almost incidental to that other, more relevant, import, of offering occasions to act as Nupe.

Finally, when the Lagos Nupe perform the public episodes of their cults, they do so in the same circumstances in which the alien enclaves in Nupe country stage their religious observances. The *gunnu* and *ndakó gboyá* are watched with keen interest by the whole native population of Lagos; above all, the Nupe 'owners' of the ceremonials are expected to perform them for the well-being of 'the whole town', including the Yoruba, and occasionally at the request of the Yoruba town chief, if some calamity (for example, witchcraft) threatens the population. Here, then, we meet with the exact counterpart of that 'religious division of labour' which turned a cult alien in Nupe into a contribution to the common weal. But the conception of the 'common weal' has been significantly widened; for the prayer formula of the Lagos ceremonials contains a new phrase—'May the whole of Nupe country prosper'. This is clearly a further expression of that 'awareness of social identity', kept alive by a tribe in exile; indeed, no more convincing expression can be conceived than this concern with the welfare of the distant mother country.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The absence, in Nupe, of complete conversions to an alien creed has a notable exception in the steady expansion of Islam. Paradoxically, though the Nupe in strange parts preserve their traditional religion because it is so much the symbol of tribal identity, in Nupe country itself that religion is disappearing. And unlike the Lagos Moslems, who keep Islam and the traditional observances apart, the Nupe in their own country have accepted 'conversion' in all its implications, including the rejection of the earlier creed. Perhaps this is no paradox. For while the emigrants have only their religion to fall back on if they wish to prove to themselves that they are still Nupe, in their own country this issue does not arise. There, Nupe social identity is still sustained by that wider 'stable array' of social facts—unbroken occupation

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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794 [178] youth, or of the *salla*, which is silent on issues of family authority, is the obverse of this picture.

Here I am repeating facts mentioned previously, though the emphasis is now not on the 'vulnerability' of the older cults in the face of change, but on their dislodgment by the new religion in the country.[1] Islam, as we have seen, proved the stronger mainly because these other changes had prepared the ground; it was a beneficiary of the social upheaval as much as a cause contributing to it. Differently expressed, Islam acted in the manner of a new model, inviting to be followed since it happened to appear at a critical moment, when older norms were breaking down. To be sure, it was a model doubly inviting; it both typified upper-class behaviour and offered alternatives for usages no longer satisfactory, and hence placed a premium on non-conformism. Without it, the dissatisfactions might not have crystallized so easily and the process of change would have been more erratic. As it happened, they found a ready focus or 'model'.

794 ● 186 We turn to the final aspect of the Moslem 'way of life', the attitude of the believer towards other creeds. I have called Nupe religion tolerant. Islam, as we know it from other parts of the world, is the exact opposite. It has all the self-righteousness and intransigence of a fervently proselytizing creed; and it lays claim not only to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth but also to an ultimate ascendancy over all other religions—to the 'inheritance of the earth', promised to the believers and meant to be secured by secular domination and 'victory in the field'.[2] In Africa, where Islam now faces pagan peoples as it did in its early history, this claim to supremacy must stand in a literal sense, meaning the superiority of believers over utter unbelievers, of people who have seen the light over mere barbarians, and of Lords and Masters over some lower species of humanity. In the Sudan, for example, this attitude is well marked. But in Nupe there is, by and large, little trace of it.

Undoubtedly, all Moslems pride themselves on being true believers and many, more or less contemptuously, look down upon the pagans. But as I mentioned before, scholarly mallams will yet frankly admit their interest in the pagan cults; few would consider it incongruous or invidious to discuss, in a purely academic spirit, the beliefs and practices of the 'unbelievers'; and the average Nupe Moslem views them as tolerantly. Nor would a Mohammedan bar all social intimacy with pagans (as I have seen it done in half-Mohammedanized parts of the Sudan) or decline to visit them in their houses or receive their visits in his. Even friendship occurs

[1] See above, pp. 97–114.
[2] See D. S. Margulies, *Mohammed*, 1939, pp. 67–8.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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across the barrier of religion. The following comments by the chief of Pichi illustrate perhaps the extreme of Nupe tolerance, 'There are three benefits', he said, 'Islam, Christianity, and the *kuti*. Some of us have chosen one, others the other. One may be stronger than the rest: but this we do not know.' To be sure, this tolerance cuts both ways; and indeed, this Nupe version of Lessing's Nathan saw nothing strange in 'making *salla*' and attending the *gunnu* as well. But then, he was only a self-professed Moslem, whom others considered a pagan at heart.

Yet, though his attitude may not be typical of the Nupe Moslems, it is typical of the outlook of the people among whom Islam finds its converts. The final step of conversion changes it but little; indeed, it can hardly be otherwise since conversion is so loose an affair and not a real 'step' at all. But in so far as the outlook of the confirmed Moslem is changed, carrying with it that pride and awareness of superiority, the pride and superiority are social rather than specifically religious. What counts is, first and foremost, the assimilation to upper-class culture, and only secondarily the deliverance from unbelief.

5. CONTACT AND INTEGRATION

In this chapter we were dealing with instances of a much-discussed social process, 'culture contact' or 'acculturation'. The wider theoretical issues involved are beyond our present scope; but no discussion of this kind can avoid touching upon one such general problem, namely, the relationship between the cultures brought into 'contact' and the 'resultant' culture emerging from it. Now, this is a question of end-states, of the final outcome of these processes of change and contact; and logically, we should start with their analysis.

The physical model of 'contact', of a 'clash of cultures', or of their 'impact' upon one another, is more misleading than helpful when picturing these processes. We revert, therefore, to our paradigm, a group possessed of given modes of behaviour, habit patterns if you like, which comes to face new models of behaviour of such-and-such pull or attractiveness. That the reactions are likely to be complex and intricate no one will deny; more importantly, they are progressive, that is, take the form of chain reactions. It is clearly not so that the new models are simply accepted, rejected, or exchanged for the habitual ways of acting as it were once and for all, after which no further readjustment will occur. The religious conversion of a people certainly is not a simple all-or-none affair, but a process of many stages in which an initial acceptance may spread further, be deepened or changed in

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida, whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, i.e., shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,